

Present: Mayor Robert Yerick, Trustees Kelly Myers, Michael Campbell, Suzanne LeBlanc, William Murphy and Richard Moore

Absent: Trustee Michael Karashay

Others: Heather Plonchak-New Saugerties Times, Alex Wade, students from SHS, David Radavanovic (arrived 25 minutes late) and others

Mayor Robert Yerick opened the Public Hearing at 6:30pm.

Mayor Yerick began by saying that he has received input on the proposed budget from Treasurer Julie Dunn, new Trustee Richard Moore and Trustee Suzanne LeBlanc. They are concerned because the Village experienced large amounts of unanticipated costs for the year 2007/2008. The costs include large legal bills, an oil spill clean up, increased cost of worker's compensation. Trustee LeBlanc added that employee wages and benefits have increased along with higher costs for fuel oil, gasoline and electricity. The unallocated fund balance is presently at \$150,000 with the fiscal year not ending in May. She reported that a tax increase is likely.

Mayor Yerick reported that all departments have been keeping a close eye on costs.

Trustee LeBlanc said that all departments have reduced their budgets wherever possible for 2008/2009. Everyone tried very hard to bring the budget in with no rate increase. Mayor Yerick added that Trustee LeBlanc and Treasurer Dunn did a great job.

Trustee LeBlanc reported that no services have been cut to Village residents however if taxes are not increased some services such as the beach, support for TV23 and the like would have to be cut. The Village is still waiting for \$100,000.00 due from NYS for streetscape expenses and \$50,000.00 from NYS for the two new police cars, causing an additional shortfall.

Trustee Moore reported that if taxes are not raised there will be a shortfall in next year's budget of around \$70,000.00. He said that revenue from mortgage taxes is falling. Treasurer Dunn agreed with both statements.

Mayor Yerick stated that even if taxes must be increased for 2008/2009, the Board has not raised taxes for 5 out of the last 9 years.

Trustee Moore advises that the tax rate be increased from 7.3881 to 7.6837 – a 4% rate increase. That will result in an additional \$76,600.00 in revenue. The increase translates to about \$60.00 per year on a property assessed at \$200,000.00.

Trustee Myers suggested that the Village look for other options to increase revenue.

Grant writer Victor Cornelius suggested sharing more services with the Town.

Mayor Yerick reminded the Board that the consultant hired by the Town and Village to study merging the Police is hard at work. Trustee Campbell asked about merging the Town Highway Department and the Village DPW. Mayor Yerick replied he is not in favor of that merger at this time. There was additional discussion regarding the police merger – results may be available in August.

Trustee Myers said she was never asked, as DPW Commissioner, her thoughts about a DPW merger. She is not in favor – the DPW supports all Village Departments helping the Village to operate most efficiently.

David Radavanovic arrived and asked if a tax increase had been discussed. Mayor Yerick advised him that he had missed the discussion. Mr. Radavanovic asked why there was a \$1200.00 decrease in youth programs and a \$32,000.00 increase in police expenses. He felt the overtime figures in the police budget were excessive. He also said that the percentage of the Police Department line in the total Village budget was very high compared to other communities. Mr. Radavanovic also felt that no cuts should be made to youth programs such as support for the Boys and Girls Club.

Trustee Campbell responded saying that some funds allocated to youth programs were not used over the past several years. Since the money was never spent, it was removed from the budget.

Trustee LeBlanc said that a \$1200.00 grant from the County was no longer available so it was removed from the budget. The Village does not run youth programs per se, but contributes to youth programs administered by other such as Art Lab.

Trustee Murphy also responded by saying there are many independent programs for kids in Saugerties such as the SAA, Little League, Pop Warner Football and more. These programs are all funded privately with volunteers. The Village supports the SAA with the use of the Donlon Auditorium for basketball. He feels there is not much need for the Village to bear the expense of running youth programs.

Mr. Radavanovic noticed that utility costs are increasing. He suggested putting solar panels on the pole barn at the Wastewater Treatment Plant and turning out lights at the plant.

Trustee Moore advised Mr. Radavanovic that Police Department overtime is spelled out in the police contract. During the last contract negotiations with the police, the Village discussed overtime and more. Agreements could not be reached between the Village and the PBA on several items. The contract was sent to binding arbitration and the judge makes a decision based on police contracts in surrounding communities. The Village does not always agree with the decisions made by an arbitrator but the decisions are binding.

Trustee Campbell said the Village holds many special events and festivals throughout the year. The Police Department must provide support for the events and in many cases that creates overtime.

Mayor Yerick commented that the many private organizations that provide leagues and events for the youth of the Saugerties community are all self-supporting and show a wonderful volunteer spirit and attitude.

There were no additional questions or comments from the public or the Board.

Motion was made by Trustee Moore, seconded by Trustee LeBlanc, to adjourn the Public Hearing on the Budget. Carried. The Hearing adjourned at 7:10pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Frank  
Village Clerk